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RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 3547  
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 8385  
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3405  
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 4565  
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2679  
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STATE FOR WHA/CAR RCBUDDEN, INR/B

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [UN](#) [BF](#)

SUBJECT: BAHAMAS UNGA REPRESENTATION AND RELATED QUESTIONS

REF: SECSTATE 127917

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires D. Brent Hardt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is in response to reftel request. The Bahamas will be represented at UNGA by Minister of Foreign Affairs Fred Mitchell, Bahamas Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dr. Paulette Bethel, and a junior officer to be determined. Prime Minister Christie will not attend.

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Permanent Representative Biography  
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¶2. (U) Dr. Paulette Bethel, The Bahamas Permanent Representative to the United Nations, is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts (Ph.D Sociology, 1980 with a dissertation on Bahamian development), Howard University (M.A. Sociology, 1973) and the University of Toronto (B.A. Sociology, 1970). She also holds a certificate as a "Creative Process Facilitator."

¶3. (U) From 1976-1978, Dr. Bethel taught in the Social Sciences Department of the College of the Bahamas. Bethel worked for the United Nations as Assistant Social Affairs Officer in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) from 1980-1983. She joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1983, where she worked as Deputy Chief of Mission to The Bahamas mission to the UN until 1988, when she moved to the same position for The Bahamas' mission to OAS. She cites her chairing the Consultative Committee of UNIFEM as a highlight of her tenure at OAS. She began working for OAS directly in 1994, serving as Fellowship Director in 1994, where she oversaw fellowship and training funds and a private endowment fund. Ms. Bethel returned to The Bahamas in 1997 to work as Vice President of Administration for Montague Securities International, a leading Bahamian international financial services firm. From 2000 to 2003, she headed the risk management and compliance operations for Cardinal International Corporation, another leading financial services firm. She was appointed to be The Bahamas Permanent Representative to the United Nations in January 2003.

¶4. (C) Dr. Bethel is a closely connected Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) insider. Milo Butler, revered as one of the founders of the PLP and The Bahamas first Governor General, was her uncle. She is the sister of PLP Minister of Energy

and the Environment Dr. Marcus Bethel. She is the sister-in-law to PLP Minister of Health Dr. Bernard Nottage and sister-in-law to PLP Minister of Education Alfred Sears. Her brother, Owen Montague Bethel, founder of the Montague Securities firm with whom she worked, worked as Executive Director of the PLP Financial Services Secretariat beginning in 1990. She is not related to The Bahamas' New York Consul Ed Bethel. She is single and has one daughter, Avery.

15. (C) Dr. Bethel also has less desirable connections. Her sister Ruby Nottage and brother-in-law Kendall Nottage have been indicted in the US for money laundering related to notorious drug trafficker Robert Vesco. Cardinal International, the financial services firm with whom Dr. Bethel worked from 1997-2000, closed its doors in 2004 while under investigation by the Securities Commission of The Bahamas for mismanagement of funds, allegedly including mismanagement that occurred during Dr. Bethel's tenure overseeing company compliance.

16. (C) During her tenure in the UN, Dr. Bethel has been heavily involved in UN Reform issues, and in April 2006, she began service as Vice Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, supporting the G-4 proposal for expansion. She is chair of the International Association of Permanent Representatives. She regularly speaks on behalf of CARICOM nations, and has done so on UN reform, trade (sugar subsidies), nuclear disarmament and other matters. Dr. Bethel is actively involved in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) issues and fora. She has been vocal in opposition to US possession of nuclear weapons on several occasions, and spoke along with Cuba, Vietnam, Iran and others against US weapons policies in remarks to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee in 2004. NOTE: While her prepared remarks were less direct, oral additions to those remarks were reportedly sharply critical of the US. END NOTE.

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Mitchell/Bethel Relationship  
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17. (C) Bethel clearly plays an important role in the development of Bahamian UN policy, along with Minister Mitchell. Mitchell noted in a December 2005 speech that he relies particularly on Bethel on issues involving Haiti and United Nations Reform. Given Bethel's role as PLP party insider, Post expects that she will adhere to official PLP positions articulated by the Foreign Minister. CARICOM and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) analysis also significantly inform MFA decisions on UN issues.

18. (C) In June, Mitchell discussed The Bahamas' process for UN decisionmaking. Following The Bahamas' vote for Cuba on the UN Human Rights Council, Foreign Minister Mitchell came under criticism from Post, media and the public. Defending The Bahamas' vote, Mitchell said that a recommendation memorandum is prepared by staff in New York and cleared by the Permanent Representative before being forwarded to the Foreign Ministry. At the Foreign Ministry, Mitchell and his staff review and clear the suggested positions. Mitchell asserted that decisions, like the vote for Cuba on the UNHRC, are part of "package voting" within country voting blocs, presumably CARICOM and NAM.

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Foreign Minister Mitchell's Participation  
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19. (C) Minister Mitchell is likely to be well-informed on UN issues. Mitchell is the recent head of COFCOR, CARICOM's foreign minister group, and remains a key foreign policy figure in the region as he continues to expand The Bahamas' international profile. He plans a meeting with Secretary Rice on the margins of UNGA, further ensuring his preparation on key issues.

¶10. (C) The General Assembly comes in the midst of increasingly vigorous political campaigning for coming elections. A close battle is anticipated, and speculation is that the elections -- required no later than May 2007 -- will be held in Winter. Post has raised concerns privately and publicly about limited Bahamian support for positions advocated by the US in the UN. Mitchell knows The Bahamas' actions at the UNGA will likely be closely monitored at home in the context of elections, and he may therefore have a heightened sensitivity to local scrutiny of UNGA. Post will forward a updated biography cable regarding Mitchell in advance of UNGA.

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Mitchell/Christie Relationship  
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¶11. (C) Prime Minister Christie has not been engaged on UN and international issues. Sometimes criticized for failing to attend international events, Christie is content to allow Foreign Minister Mitchell to oversee Bahamian foreign policy. Mitchell's relationship with PM Christie remains strong, though he is not in Christie's inner circle and there is no personal bond between them. Christie appears to trust Mitchell's formulation and handling of foreign policy. Though Christie has been privately critical of Mitchell on occasion, Mitchell has significant ability to influence The Bahamas' stance on UN and other foreign policy matters.  
HARDT